(d) by when Government are, likely to take steps to end pollution in Yamuna which has currently become a dirty drain and being misused?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) and (b) According to the information received from the Ministry of Water Resources, there are proposals for construction of three storage reservoirs namely, Renuka Dam Project, Kishau Dam Project and Lakhwar Vyasi Dam Project, mainly intended for regulating the flow of water in the river Yamuna during the year by increasing the lean season flow after storing the excess water during high flow periods. In this regard, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed in May, 1994 by the Chief Ministers of basin states of Delhi, UP, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Rajasthan. The MoU covers allocation of annual utilizable flow of river Yamuna to the basin States including Uttarakhand. The storage projects namely, Renuka Dam (Government of Himachal Pradesh through Pabbar Valley Power Corporation), Kishau Dam (Government of Uttarakhand through Tehri Hydro Power Development Corporation) and Lakhwar Vyasi Dam (Government of Uttarakhand through National Hydro-electric Power Corporation) are at various stages of investigation/preparation of Detailed Project Report (DPR) and obtaining various clearances regarding Environment and Forest, Resettlement and Rehabilitation etc.

(c) The provisional cost of the three storage dams is presently estimated to be Rs. 12291 crore approximately. In the context of improvement of water quality in river Yamuna, the estimated cost of sewage treatment capacity envisaged to be created/augmented in Haryana, Delhi and U.P. under Yamuna Action Plan, Phase-II of Ministry of Environment and Forests is Rs. 173.03 crore. In addition, Government of NCT of Delhi has taken up large scale sewerage and sewage treatment works from its own plan funds.

(d) The quality of water in Yamuna has not shown the desired improvement, particularly in Delhi, owing to the large gap between the demand and the availability of the sewage treatment capacity and lack of availability of fresh water for ensuring minimum flow in the river. Implementation of the river pollution abatement works is an ongoing and continuous activity of the Government under which various schemes of pollution abatement are implemented by the Government based upon the estimated pollution loads. Due to ever-increasing population leading to increased pollution load and gap in the availability of financial resources to take up the works commensurate with the requirements, there is likely to be persistent divergence between the pollution load tackled and the actual pollution load. While the construction of reservoirs is mainly intended for regulating the flow of water during the year by increasing the lean season flow after storing the excess water during high flow periods, it will also help in ameliorating the water quality of river Yamuna.

Receding Gangotri glacier

1272. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether India's holiest river Ganga is under greater threat from warming than ever before as Himalayan source Gangotri glacier is receding by 120 feet a year and some of the glaciers could disappear by 2030;

(b) whether UN findings/environmentalists want Indian Government to enforce strict reduction of greenhouse gas emission, primary cause of climate change, apart from asking corporations not to dump toxins in the river; and

(c) if so remedial measures Government have taken so far in this regard as 50 crore people depend on Ganga river for spiritually purifying, drinking water and farming purposes?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) No, Sir. As per the studies carried out by Geological Survey of India (GSI) for the period 1935-1996, Gangotri Glacier is receding at an average rate of 18.8 m/yr. Studies carried out by other agencies have variously estimated the rate of recession as 17.15 m/yr during the period 1971-2004 and 12.10 m during the year 2005-06. The catchment of Ganga and other rivers originating from Himalaya happen to be located on a high rainfall zone, and are thus fed by substantial amount of rainwater too. It is a fact that Himalayan glaciers are receding. GSI is monitoring the Himalayan glaciers and making an effort to understand the causes of recession. It has not been established conclusively that recession is only due to global warming. It may also be a cyclic phase of recession witnessed in the history of evolution of the earth.

(b) The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change recognises the fact that as developing countries grow these emissions are bound to increase.

Although India as a developing country does not have any mitigation commitments, we are following a sustainable development path through range of policies and programmes to mitigate climate change, some of which are:

I. ensuring energy conservation and improved energy efficiency in various sectors as well as setting up of Bureau of Energy Efficiency

II. promoting use of renewable energy

III. power sector reforms and active renewable energy programme

IV. use of cleaner and lesser carbon intensive fuel for transport

V. fuel switching to encourage cleaner energy

VI. afforestation and conservation of forests

VII. promotion of clean coal technologies

VIII. reduction of gas flaring

IX. encouraging Mass Rapid Transport systems

X. environmental quality management for all sectors

As per Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974 and Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 along with rules under these Acts, corporations can not dump toxins into the river. This law is enforced by State Pollution Control Boards.

Under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of National River Conservation Plan of the Ministry of Environment and Forests, various works are undertaken for pollution abatement in major rivers including Ganga through interception and diversion of sewage for its treatment and construction of Sewage Treatment Plants and Low Cost Sanitation. Under the Ganga Action Plan-(GAP) Phase I & II, 1747 mld. (million litres per day) of sewage treatment capacity has been created so far. With the pollution abatement works completed so far under Ganga Action Plan, the water quality of the river Ganga has shown discernible improvement at major locations over its pre-GAP quality as per the water quality monitoring undertaken by independent reputed institutions in the country. The National Environment Policy, 2006 also advocates an integrated approach for management of river basins by the concerned river authorities, ensuring maintenance of adequate flows, adherence to water quality standards throughout their course in all seasons and protection of land resources.

Expansion of forest cover

1273. SHRIMATI JAYA BACHCHAN: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the present extent of green cover in the country, in terms of percentage;

(b) whether it is a fact that the green cover has not inched forward beyond 19 per cent;

(c) whether it is also a fact that in terms of the forest policy of 1950s, the green cover was envisaged as 25 per cent and in terms of this, we have not added to our forest cover and the danger of global warming is looming over our head; and

(d) the steps Government are considering to address the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI S. REGUPATHY): (a) The present Forest and Tree Cover (FTC) in the country is 23.68%.

(b) No, Sir. There is marginal increase in the forest cover. The status of forest cover in the country is as under:

Assessment year	1997	1999	2001	2003
% of geographical area	19.27	19.39	20.55	20.64

(c) No, Sir. The National Forest Policy, 1952 aimed at maintaining 1/3rd of land area under forests. In spite of making all efforts, we are able to maintain 23.57 forest land, 20.64 forest cover and 23.68% Forest and tree cover.

(d) The government of India has taken following steps to achieve 33% Forest and Tree Cover (FTC) in the country:

- Guidelines have been issued by Government of India on 15-12-2004 to the States for rationalization of regulatory provision about felling and transport of trees grown on private lands.